

NEW BOARD CHAIR MELANIE ERCOLI HOLDS STRONG VISION FOR SCHOLA CANTORUM

Expansion is the word you'll hear often when Melanie Ercoli, Schola Cantorum's newly-elected board chair, speaks of the non-profit organization, now entering its 52nd season. By expanding their repertoire, their audiences, their financial base and their reach into the community, she envisions the choral group sharing their music for another fifty-plus years, ninety voices strong.

Her vision includes ongoing auditions for new and returning members, more joint work with rising stars and possibly children's choirs, volunteer activities in elementary schools, mentorship programs in high schools and junior colleges, and a subscription series capability for residents of retirement communities.

Melanie's music training began early, studying piano at the age of four, and taking up singing in her early teens. Her parents, Juilliard-trained piano and vocal teachers, made it clear there were easier ways to make a living than music, so at the age of eighteen, Melanie attended Southern Methodist University on scholarship in the computer science department. "I had never seen a computer," she admits. She evolved with the industry to the point where her primary focus is now in data analytics, business intelligence, and project management for HP Inc.

"I was a bit driven then," she recalls, finishing up a Bachelors and Master in Computer Science in four years, followed by marriage, children, and an MBA from the University of Denver. She now has three children and seven grandkids, which "keep me busy."

Still, she found time to sing with the Houston Symphony Chorus and local church choirs as her children grew up, and later the San Jose State Chorus and the Los Altos United Methodist Church Chancel Choir after she moved to the Bay Area in 1989. She also found time to branch into opera and musical theater with Opera San Jose, Lyric Theater of San Jose, Mission City Opera, and several Foothill College summer musicals. In 1990 she auditioned for and joined Schola Cantorum, impressed by their diversity of literature, their talent as a group, and the musicianship of their music director, Gregory Wait.

With a view of retirement in the not too distant future, Melanie thought it was time to give back, and welcomed the challenge to lead Schola into the future as board chair, applying her skills in project management and sales.



“Through its long history, the organization has learned to evolve and stay current,” she says. And Melanie is dedicated to making sure that success continues.